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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a new multi-scale instrument--the Bronstein-Cruz Child/Adolescent Self-Concept and Adjustment Scale, which measures self-concept and psychological adjustment for children and adolescents, aged 10-18 years. It consists of five subscales: Self-Evaluation, Social and Peer Relations, Family Relations, Sense of Mastery, and Emotional Well-Being/Distress, plus a total scale score as an indicator of overall positive self-concept and functioning. The instrument has been administered to approximately 1,000 children in grades 5-12, and norms are currently being established. Whole scale reliability (alpha) ranged from 0.93 to 0.95, and subscale reliabilities ranged from 0.69 to 0.90, with a mean of 0.84; these are higher than any published reliability coefficients for similar measures. In addition, other measures administered concurrently in an in-depth study of 43 fifth graders indicate good convergent and criterion validity for the instrument. Comparisons between this scale and other measures are summarized in chart form. (Author/SLD)

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a new multi-scale instrument, which measures self-concept and psychological adjustment for children and adolescents, aged 10-18. It consists of 5 subscales: Self-Evaluation, Social and Peer Relations, Family Relations, Sense of Mastery, and Emotional Well-Being/Distress, plus a total scale score as an indicator of overall positive self-concept and functioning. The instrument has been administered approximately 1000 children in grades 5-12, and norms are currently being established. Whole scale reliability (alpha) ranged from .93 to .95, and subscale reliabilities ranged from .69 to .90, with a mean of .84; these are higher than any published reliability coefficients for similar measures. In addition, other measures administered concurrently in an in-depth study of 43 fifth graders indicate good convergent and criterion validity for the instrument.

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A Measure of Child and Adolescent
Self-Concept and Psychological Adjustment

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Most of the existing instruments measuring child or adolescent self-concept, psychological adjustment, or emotional distress have been designed for limited use, or have limitations imposed by their psychometric properties. Some of the more widely used measures are suitable for children, but not adolescents (e.g., Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale, Harter Revised Competence Scale for Children, Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale, Children's Depression Inventory), or for adolescents but not children (Offer Self-Image Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale). For some measures, subscale or whole scale reliability has proven to be weak, (Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale). For others, item wording and dichotomous response choices have tended to elicit socially desirable responses, or in the case of negatively worded items, may have elicited (from younger children and poorer readers) inappropriate responses, which do not correlate with the rest of the scale (Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale, Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale). Some widely used measures have proven to be good indicators of psychopathology, but do not effectively discriminate between levels of well-being or distress for non-pathological respondents (Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist, Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale, Children's Depression Inventory). Others, like Harter's Perceived Competence Scale for Children, focus only on perceptions of competence, and not on emotional functioning. Thus there is no currently established all-in-one instrument, which effectively measures self-esteem, sense of competence, social and family functioning, and psychological well-

being/distress, in separate domains as well as in a summed measure of self-concept and psychological adjustment -- and which can be used with both children and adolescents.

We believe that the present instrument, the Bronstein-Cruz Child/Adolescent Self-Concept and Adujustment Scale (hereafter referred to as the BC Scale) fulfills the need for such an instrument. The BC Scale consists of 90 items, which make up five subscales, as well as an 90-item global total. The subscales are:

Self-Evaluation

Social and Peer Relations

Family Relations

Sense of Mastery

Emotional Well-Being/Distress

Four response choices are provided:

That's very true about me.

That's sort of true about me.

That's not very true about me.

That's not at all true about me.

The BC scale has been administered to approximately 100 children in grades 5-12, for the purpose of determining reliability and establishing norms; in addition, it has been administered to a sample of 43 fifth graders (mean age 10.5 years), as part of a larger study of parent-child relations as a factor in self-concept, psychological functioning, and school adjustment. Thusfar, the data from this 5th grade sample, plus those from the 6th, 8th, 9th, 10, and 11th grade samples in the norming study have been analyzed. The following tables present the reliability coefficients obtained, as well as indicators of concurrent and convergent validity. Measures used to determine concurrent

validity were ratings of classroom behavior by two teachers, peer nominations as best friend, grades in academic subjects, grades for work habits and social and emotional adjustment, and standardized achievement scores. In addition, each child and his or her parents rated family behaviors on the Bloom Family Functioning Scale, which has 15 subscales measuring patterns of family behavior. The three individual Bloom ratings were combined into a single family measure, which was then correlated with the BC Scale.

BRONSTEIN-CRUZ CHILD/ADOLESENT
SELF-CONCEPT AND ADJUSTMENT SCALE
(BC SCALE)

COMPARISON OF CHARACTERISTICS

	AGE RANGE	NO. OF ITEMS	RESPONSE CHOICES
BC SCALE	10-18	90	1-4
PIERS-HARRIS	9-16	80	0-1
COOPERSMITH	9-12	50	0-1
HARTER	8-11	36	1-4
ROSENBERG	12+	10	1-4
OFFER	13-19	130	1-6

COMPARISON OF RELIABILITY

	INTERNAL CONSISTENCY (ALPHA, SPLIT HALF, KR-20)	TEST-RETEST (PEARSON r)
BC SCALE	.94-.95	.84-.88
PIERS HARRIS	.90	.77
COOPERSMITH	.77-.92	.88
ROSENBERG	.21-.83	.85
HARTER (SUBSCALES)	.71-.85	.69-.87
OFFER	.73	.31.81 (SUBSCALES)

CONVERGENT VALIDITY

CORRELATED WITH:	r	p
PIERS-HARRIS	.61	.001
HARTER (SUBSCALES)	.26-.71	.05-.001

BC SUBSCALES: SELF-EVALUATION

SAMPLE ITEMS

"WHEN I LOOK IN THE MIRROR, I DON'T LIKE WHAT I SEE"

"I'M SMART, AND I LEARN VERY FAST"

"I FEEL AWKWARD AND UNCOORDINATED"

"I HAVE A LOT OF NATURAL ABILITY"

COMPARATIVE RELIABILITY

	INTERNAL CONSISTENCY	TEST-RETEST
BC SELF-EVALUATION	.85-.86	.82-.88
PIERS-HARRIS		
BEHAVIOR	.81	
INTELLECTUAL	.78	
PHYSICAL	.76	
HARTER		
SCHOLASTIC	.80-.85	.78
PHYSICAL	.76-.82	.80-.87
GLOBAL SELF-WORTH	.78-.84	.69-.70
OFFER: SELF-IMAGE	.38-.66	

CONVERGENT VALIDITY

CORRELATED WITH:	r	p
PIERS-HARRIS		
BEHAVIOR	.29	.03
INTELLECTUAL	.64	.001
PHYSICAL	.57	.001
TOTAL	.61	.001
HARTER		
SCHOLASTIC	.78	.001
PHYSICAL	.57	.001
GLOBAL SELF-WORTH	.60	.001

BC SUBSCALES: SOCIAL AND PEER RELATIONS

SAMPLE ITEMS

"I FIND IT EASY TO MAKE FRIENDS"

"MY FRIENDS THINK I'M FUN TO BE WITH"

"I FEEL OUT OF PLACE AT PARTIES"

"I DON'T GET ALONG VERY WELL WITH MY CLASSMATES"

COMPARATIVE RELIABILITY

	INTERNAL CONSISTENCY	TEST-RETEST
BC SOCIAL & PEER	.82-.88	.79-.81
PIERS-HARRIS: POPULARITY	.74	
HARTER: SOCIAL	.75-.84	.75-.80
OFFER: SOCIAL	.61-.71	

CONVERGENT VALIDITY

CORRELATED WITH:	r	p
PIERS-HARRIS: POPULARITY	.68	.001
HARTER: SOCIAL	.47	.001

BC SUBSCALES: FAMILY RELATIONS

SAMPLE ITEMS

"I TALK OVER MY PROBLEMS WITH MY FATHER OR MY MOTHER"

"AT MY HOUSE, IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG, THEY BLAME ME"

"IN MY HOME, NOBODY PAYS ATTENTION TO ME"

"I ENJOY GOING PLACES WITH MY FAMILY"

COMPARATIVE RELIABILITY

	INTERNAL CONSISTENCY	TEST-RETEST
BC FAMILY RELATIONS	.80-.86	.75-.80
OFFER: FAMILY	.57-.58	

BC SUBSCALES: SENSE OF MASTERY

SAMPLE ITEMS

"GENERALLY IF I CAN'T DO SOMETHING THE FIRST TIME, I STOP TRYING"

"I GENERALLY STAND UP FOR MYSELF IF I THINK I'M BEING TREATED UNFAIRLY"

"I FEEL THAT IT'S EASY TO GET MY FRIENDS TO DO WHAT I WANT THEM TO DO"

"IF SOMETHING BAD IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN, I FEEL LIKE THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO TO STOP IT"

COMPARATIVE RELIABILITY

	INTERNAL CONSISTENCY	TEST-RETEST
BC SENSE OF MASTERY	.69-.74	.59-.80
OFFER: MASTERY	.45-.63	
NOWICKI-STRICKLAND	.67-.72	.63-.71

CONVERGENT VALIDITY

CORRELATED WITH:	r	p
HARTER:		
SCHOLASTIC COMPETENCE	.54	.001

BC SUBSCALES: EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING/DISTRESS

SAMPLE ITEMS

"MANY DAYS I FEEL LIKE CRYING"

"I FEEL THAT PEOPLE ARE LAUGHING AT ME BEHIND MY BACK"

"I FEEL PRETTY RELAXED AT SCHOOL"

"I GET ANGRY EASILY WHEN THINGS DON'T GO MY WAY"

COMPARATIVE RELIABILITY

	INTERNAL CONSISTENCY	TEST-RETEST
BC WELL-BEING/DISTRESS	.85-.90	.83-.88
PIERS-HARRIS:		
ANXIETY	.74	
HAPPINESS	.73	
OFFER:		
EMOTIONAL TONE	.40-.81	
PSYCHOPATHOLOGY	.66-.75	
SUPERIOR ADJUSTMENT	.52-.61	
MANIFEST ANXIETY SCALE	.85	

CONVERGENT VALIDITY

CORRELATED WITH:	r	p
PIERS-HARRIS:		
ANXIETY	.58	.01
HAPPINESS	.48	.001
MANIFEST ANXIETY SCALE	-.68	.001
CHILDREN'S DEPRESSION INVENTORY	-.62	.001

BC TOTAL SCALE

CONCURRENT VALIDITY

BC TOTAL SCALE CORRELATED WITH:	r	p
TEACHER RATINGS	.38	.007
CHOSEN AS BEST FRIEND	.33	.02
ACADEMIC GRADES	.46	.001
GRADES FOR WORK HABITS	.33	.02
ACHIEVEMENT SCORES	.42	.003
FAMILY ENVIRONMENT (BLOOM)		
COHESIVENESS	.56	.001
SOCIABILITY	.41	.009
DEMOCRATIC STYLE	.51	.001
EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL	-.60	.001
ENMESHMENT	-.33	.04
IDEALIZATION	.35	.02

Additional Findings of Interest

Boys were consistently higher than girls on the Self-Evaluation subscale. 11th grade boys were higher than girls on the Sense of Mastery subscale.

Children from intact families with both biological parents scored consistently higher than children from families in which separation or divorce had occurred, though this effect decreased with age, and had disappeared by 11th grade.

SES was consistently correlated with BC Scale scores, but this decreased with age, and had disappeared by 11th grade.

BC SCALE

T-TESTS OF SEX DIFFERENCES BY GRADE

	6TH	8TH	9-10TH	11TH	ALL
SUBSCALES					
SELF-EVALUATION	-2.11**		-2.15	-3.84	-4.32
SOCIAL + PEER					1.68
FAMILY RELATIONS					1.74
SENSE OF MASTERY				-2.48	-1.74

*PROBABILITY ESTIMATES < .05, 1-TAILED

**NEGATIVE T VALUES = BOYS HIGHER
POSITIVE T VALUES = GIRLS HIGHER

BC SCALE

T-TESTS OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHILDREN FROM DIVORCED VS. NON-DIVORCED FAMILIES, BY GRADE*

SUBSCALES	6TH	8TH	9-10TH	11TH	ALL
SELF-EVALUATION		2.55**			1.69
SOCIAL + PEER		2.15			1.66
FAMILY RELATIONS	2.34	1.77	2.37		3.15
SENSE OF MASTERY	1.56	2.23			1.49
WELL-BEING/ DISTRESS	1.89	2.70	1.97		3.45
BC TOTAL	1.97	2.65	1.49		3.18

*IN ALL ABOVE INSTANCES, MEAN SCORES WERE HIGHER IN NON-DIVORCED FAMILIES (WITH 2 BIOLOGICAL PARENTS).

**PROBABLY ESTIMATES < .05, 1-TAILED

BC SCALE

CORRELATIONS WITH GRADE LEVEL, AGE, AND FATHER'S OCCUPATION/EDUCATION*

SUBSCALES	GRADE	AGE	SES
SELF-EVALUATION	-.09**	-.11	.12
FAMILY RELATIONS	-.15	-.16	.14
SENSE OF MASTERY	-.08	-.10	.20
WELL-BEING DISTRESS	-.08	-.10	.08
BC TOTAL	-.11	-.13	.14

*SES = FATHER'S OCCUPATION/EDUCATION USING HOLLINGSHEAD (1975) FORMULA

**PROBABILITY ESTIMATES < .05

BC SCALE

DECREASING CORRELATION WITH SES THROUGH ADOLESCENCE

	GRADE			
SUBSCALES	6TH	8TH	9-10TH	11TH
SELF-EVALUATION	.37*	.18	.11	-.17
SOCIAL + PEER	.28	.31	NS	NS
FAMILY RELATIONS	.28	.18	.18	NS
SENSE OF MASTERY	.21	.29	.22	NS
WELL-BEING DISTRESS	.26	.21	NS	-.16
BC TOTAL	.33	.27	.15	NS

*PROBABILITY ESTIMATES < .05

Conclusion

Thus the BC Scale, examining the data that have been analyzed thusfar, has demonstrated higher internal consistency for the whole scale and for subscales than existing widely used measures of children's self-concept and psychological functioning. In addition, the data indicate good convergent validity, and suggest that the BC Scale may be a good predictor of classroom behavior and peer attachment and acceptance in the school setting. It is anticipated that further analysis of the data on the 43 children, including measures of parent-child interaction and parents' perceptions of their children, will provide further indicators of the effectiveness of the scale. Finally, the sex and age norms that we are obtaining, as well as reliability coefficients for different age groupings, will make the instrument a valuable tool for both longitudinal and cross-cultural research.